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Summary Dinnage on 'The Oxford Book of Dreams'

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BIOGRAPHY

ANDREW FIELD

The formidable Miss Barnes: The life of Djuna Barnes
267pp. Secker and Warburg. £12.95.
0 436 153598

DJUNA BARNES

Snake and Other Stories
180pp. Sun and Moon Press, College Park, Maryland.
0 90650 17

Djuna Barnes died last year, 1982, at the age of ninety. For forty-one years this avant-garde 1920s figure had been living in a small apartment in Greenwich Village, surviving on her meagre royalties and a stipend from Peggy Guggenheim. The stipend itself was sort of survival if one considers the embittered relationship she had with Miss Guggenheim and, almost unwillingly, with everyone else. The last years were proud and sad, frugal and lonely, and unproductive except for a verse play, *The Antiphon*, completed in 1954. I was present at the first reading of the play at Harvard in 1956, and the evening was dismaying. These Barnes's long silence had ended in this play, which had about it all the anxious, self-destructive tones of an impossibility into which great effort and hope had been poured. T. S. Eliot, in support of his long friendship with her, was in the audience, and he was also and perhaps recklessly present in *The Antiphon*, a vehement, overwrought family reunion of badly written, declamatory verse and intense, unachieved bitterness of feeling. That night Djuna Barnes, a widow of wild and original gifts, reminded me in her person of one of those *millie de guerre* posters of the First World War. She was a wounded heroine of some kind and somehow abandoned, but just what the line of her face had been was difficult to know.

To her name there is always to be attached the splendour of *Nightwood*, a lasting achievement of her great gifts and eccentricities. Her passionate pose and, in this case, a genuineness of human passions also. A love of literary pastiche and parody made her earlier works, *Ryder* and *Ladies Amnack*, an astonishment of wit, as well as a wearying fluency of capital letters, scholastic turns of speech, anamorphic, and general mischief-making and amused perversity.

A certain bulkiness seems to have

been part of her character, and her career showed little aptitude for the sturdy and inspired exploitation that turned the most improbable of her contemporaries, Gertrude Stein, into an institution. For Djuna Barnes, Joyce was the inspiration and grandeur of the period. In Paris she formed a friendship with him which was strong enough for him to have given her the original manuscript, with his annotations, of *Ulysses*. With her usual rotten luck she was forced to sell it before it commanded a price that might have saved her from the penury and dependence of so many years of her life.

Andrew Field's biography, *The Formidable Miss Barnes*, is not a work of any special vivacity. It is under considerable strain in all its parts and can only chatter about desperately about one who was noted for her silences. The title is the first indication of a perplexity. *Formidable* and *Miss Barnes* cannot easily draw us into the riddle, and the primness of the words does not telegraph the creative and personal hardships of the life. He tells of only one meeting with her, in 1977, and from that we conclude that he did not succeed in getting much out of her. Field's book is best when it reads like notes for another book. The portrait of certain Greenwich Village characters such as Guido Bruno, the model, apparently, for Felix Vosslein in *Nightwood*, and a nuisance named Elsa Baroness von Freytag-Loringhoven, are smusing period pieces from the old days. The American expatriates in Paris - Hemingway, Natalie Barney and others - are sketched in once more from the well-known documentation. There is a struggle with the written work of Djuna Barnes but Field finds it hard to stay the course for fifteen rounds and so there is a good deal of sparring with the names of characters and the names in real life and the name of Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* and what, if anything, the correspondence might indicate.

Djuna Barnes was born in Cornwall-on-Hudson in New York State in 1897. Her father, whom she hated, was a doctor and believe, was a pretentious ne'er-do-well bohemian with mistresses and not much else. Her mother was English, having been born in Rutland. The parents were divorced and the grandparents were divorced and there is a tangle of half-brothers and sisters. Quite early Djuna had to undertake the support of her mother and three brothers, and she did this

The fate of the gifted

Elizabeth Hardwick

with admirable energy and talent in the New York newspaper world. The newspaper style of the time was jazzy enough, but rather primitive as a vehicle for her talents. Nevertheless, a recent selection from this work, *Snake and Other Stories*, shows her early mastery of a Flaubert dandyism and theatricality. From "Psniks Johnson":

The boy from Stroud's was a tall blond wimpster who had put his hands into his mother's hair and shaken it free of gold; a lad who had painted his cheeks from the palette of the tenderlin, the pink that descends from one member of a family to the other, quicksilver running down life's pages.

In Greenwich Village she knew Edmund Wilson, Edna Millay and Eugene O'Neill. She wrote for *Smart Set*, *Vanité Fair* and *The Little Review*. She went on to Paris and knew all the interesting artists of the time. The wonderful photographs by Man Ray and Bernice Abbott show her to have been extraordinarily chic and good-looking. During this time she wrote *Ryder*, *Ladies Amnack* and *Nightwood* and by 1940 she was back in New York, where she lived for four more decades.

The life of this remarkable American woman seemed to follow step by step the journey of the gifted of her time. Her experiences had a typicality about them: high literary ambitions, a lot of drinking, little money, London, Paris, Berlin and desperate encounters along the way. She was a lesbian in her life and in her work, although there were affairs with men, an abortion fairly late on. "I'm not a lesbian, I just loved Thelma", she said in Field's account. This is a remark. Field thinks of her as "basically heterosexual", whatever that may mean. In fact "basically" appears to mean the other way and there is little evidence that she anguished over the fact of her lesbianism, even though the terrible Thelma Wood was an English lesbian. Thelma was the Robin Wood of *Nightwood*. Just as Djuna Barnes herself is, in the way of the transformations of literature, the Nors Flood.

Thelma Wood was no American who made sculptures with large feet rather like her own. In spite of that she was a dashing beauty with a bit of money at times. She drove a red Bugatti, cruised the lesbian bars, drank enormously, lied, teased, was unfaithful and gave

Miss Barnes the miserable fate of wandering the streets at night looking for her. In *Nightwood* she has the nature of a destructive, forgetful beast. Janet Flanner called her "the bitch of all times". So this love affair was a draining, spirit-crushing disaster and at last it was broken off. After that, Miss Barnes stayed with Peggy Guggenheim in England, knew the lovers and friends collected there, was stonily friendly with Antonia White and rather more peacefully with Charles Henri Ford. But somehow her friendships did not work out much better than her love affairs. A difficult and unhappy nature she seems to have had - prickly, proud and sarcastic.

Ryder is a daunting work, published in 1928 when the author was thirty-one. The dreadful father, here called Wendell Ryder, and his three women, mother, wife and mistress, are the centre of this tale, as perhaps it can be called. There is an abundance of incident, some of it corresponding to known autobiographical details. Still, there cannot have been an intention to create the feeling of a genuine family chronicle, since events and persons are by style put at a distance of several centuries. In a chapter called "Wendell Discusses Himself with His Mother", the dialogue runs:

Sometimes I am a whore in ruffled petticoat, playing madly of a pack of ruffians, and getting thruppence for my pains; a smartly boxed ear, or a bottom-linging slap-slap... and once I was a bird who flew down my own throat, twanging at the heart cord, to get the pitch of my own mate-call.

Even the essential facts of narrative information are rendered in a mannered tone that often has the cadence of translation: "At the end of three weeks, his shadow was exceeding lean. On the coming of Saturday he was sacked. (His companions in clerical saying that it was due to his delivery of prussic acid to a weaning lady in Chiswick, in place of bismuth.)"

The pastiche, parody and flow are accomplished with outstanding virtuosity of language, witty juxtapositions and reversals, and a wonderful ending-line for the book and for Wendell: "And whom should he disappoint?" Ryder is a curiosity, showing its period, the 1920s, only in a sophisticated and conscious malice and in the studied, learned manipulation of styles. The zest and the jest are perhaps embroiled

too lovingly. The manner itself is the intention and the ear is bookish and rather overwhelming.

The "Englishness" of Djuna Barnes's work, after her early apprenticeship, is perhaps to be laid at the door of her rejected American father. There is scarcely an American rhythm or cadence in her work and even the description of Nora's American background in *Nightwood* has the generalizing aspect of something worked up rather than known from birth - for example, the atmosphere of Nora's house: "The Drummer Boy, Fort Sumter, Lincoln, Booth, all somehow came to mind; Whigs and Tories were in the air..."

The famous Dr O'Connor of *Nightwood* makes his first appearance in *Ryder*. And he is there as he will be - a monologist. Dr O'Connor, an American going about Paris, talked and talked, both in life and in novels by Americans other than Djuna Barnes. Field runs the Doctor down and finds that his performances received a mixed reception, with some remembering him as fantastical and amusing and others, of course, bored out of their skulls in his presence. In any case, his real name was Dan Mahoney and he was a very noticeable queen around the Paris bars. He blued his eyelids and coated his eyelashes and covered his heavy beard with face powder. He claimed to have served in the Navy and to be a medical doctor, but he was the sort whose name does not appear in the records of institutions. Aside from his fabrications he spoke of himself, truthfully, as "poor Minnie Mahoney, the girl whom God forgot". Fashionable lesbians liked him and he was cosy company.

"A slight anticlerical wiggling", Djuna Barnes called *Ladies Amnack* and it is just that. Many of the lesbian women in Paris appeared in this amiable evanescent which featured Dame Evangeline Musset (Mabelle Barney), Lady Buck and Bilk and Tilly-Tweed in Blood (Lady Una Troubridge and Radclyffe Hall). The book was privately printed in Paris in 1929 and hawked along the Left Bank by bold young women. It is a teasing and bold production and very much written, not tossed off, and again in the mock Eng-lish manner.

Now this be a Tale of as fine a Wench as ever wet Bed; she who was called Evangeline Musset, and who was in her heart one Grand Red Cross for

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Between art and artist

Michael Tanner

WOLFGANG HILDESHEIMER

Marbot: A Biography
Translated by Patricia Crompton
246pp. Dent. £8.95.
0 460 04576 8
Mozart
Translated by Marion Feber
405pp. Dent. £10.95.
0 460 0437 1

These books are both biographies, though of an unusual kind. *Marbot* tells us a considerable amount about a person who didn't exist, though he is surrounded by others who did. *Mozart* tells us very little indeed about the most remarkable artist who has ever existed. Both books are puzzling in crucial respects, and considering them together has added to rather than lessening my bewilderment.

Wolfgang Hildesheimer is a man of wide-ranging interests and activities. The biographical note on him under the photo on the dust-jacket of *Mozart* — a photo of a man who, as a latter-day Marbot might have observed, should be concentrating on lighting his pipe, but instead is casting a shrewd, sceptical gaze at the camera — tells us that he was born in 1916, received part of his education in England, and is an established figure in Germany as a novelist, playwright and graphic artist, as well as being an authority on Mozart. He produced *Mozart* in 1977 and *Marbot* in 1981. Though it is the earlier book which can't get under way without extensive broodings on the task of the biographer in general and Mozart's in particular, it is the later book which, eschewing self-consciousness on that front, gives a clearer indication of what Hildesheimer expects of a biographer. Or perhaps not. Whereas Mozart's biographer is unquestionably Hildesheimer, using always the authorial "we" and often to very good effect, *Marbot* is a person, and often happily uses the first-person singular. We don't find out much about him — he can't be compared to Seneca, Zelig, Zelig, the biographer of Mann's Dr Faustus. And it is difficult to know to what extent he is to be viewed critically. He is an extremely naïve Freudian, but then so is Hildesheimer. Both have been the Odipus, complex and Marbot's biographer occasionally refers to object transference; but there their use of, and so far as one can gather, their knowledge of psychoanalysis ends. Marbot's incest with life mother — the crucial event of his life — is described as "the fulfilment of a burning mutual desire than which scarcely anything more illicit and sinful can be imagined"; and Byron's "irresistible" is equated with his having had an enormous penis. Such gaucheries incline one to think that Hildesheimer is indulging in a laboured joke, but that idea is contradicted by the fact that the biography of Marbot is deemed worth writing because he was the first modern critic in that he regarded individual works of art as valuable above all because of the insight they give into the recesses of the mind that created them, and he therefore provided a blueprint for Hildesheimer's activities in *Mozart*. For Hildesheimer not only loves Mozart's work, he also loves the supreme critical challenge because of the eternally insoluble riddle: How could that man have written those works?

The biographer of Marbot is not, of course, faced with any such riddle. If the reader of *Marbot* asks why it was necessary for Hildesheimer to invent him, the answer is, because he didn't exist. He plugs what Hildesheimer, Beatty regards as a "hole" in cultural history, his alleged depth psychological forays, validating later critical procedures. The last entry in Marbot's notebooks, before he committed suicide, is "The artist plays on his soul, but who plays on the soul of the artist?" and this is the question Marbot's alibi books end. He was the first to ask it. We are still waiting for the answer. But who does "we" refer to? Not, at any rate, to the vast majority of contemporary critics whose apparatus is as sophisticated as that they are likely to be unimpaired by

such a Merbotian passage as this from *Marbot*:

Hardly any serious student of Mozart can have avoided playing this game of key speculation [i.e. What is the characteristic emotional tone of works in G minor, A major, C minor, E flat, in Mozart?], for it is fruitful and open to all; everyone can play and, by sharing his experience, can consider himself a winner. There would be losers only if some witnesses were found to swear that Mozart wrote the andante of the G minor Symphony, for example, in high spirits, in a great creative moment, feeling himself capable, in a truly imperious way, of mediating for the listener the experience of a tragic feeling. Only then would our interpretive fever be quelled.

Would it, should it be? I had hoped that the last had been heard of the Intentional Fallacy, but here it is committed in so crass a form that I feel like calling Wimaatt and Beersdyck back and telling them that all is forgiven. Not only is the idea that the ultimate criterion for establishing the tone of a passage is the author's word absurd, but the dangers of circularity for anyone engaged in an enterprise such as Hildesheimer's are plain: one validates one's claims about the work from what the author says about it, and then writes one's biography of the author's soul from what one has found in his work.

Oddly enough Sir Andrew Marbot, in the numerous passages on works of art quoted from his notebooks and letters, never seems inclined to do any such thing. The brilliantly perceptive remarks which of course demonstrate that Hildesheimer is a superb critic of painting, of Mantegna's frescoes in Mantua, Giotto's in Padua, Tiepolo's ceiling-fresco in the *Treppenhof* of the Residenz in Würzburg, Delacroix's "The Death of Sardanapalus", and many other portraits, especially his self-portraits, neither clarify nor intensify anything about the artists, nor are the artists called in to explain or determine the character and quality of their work. Marbot's interest in the wound and the bow is frequently stressed by his biographer as having its source in his own wound — his relationship with his mother, and the necessity of its termination — and his lack of a bow: he valued artistic creativity above all other things and knew himself to be totally devoid of it. Like many people in the same predicament, he was insatiably curious to know what it would be like, in detail, to be an artist. But that curiosity seems, in spite of a great deal that his biographer says, to have left his critical faculty intact. Marbot also emerges as an acute psychologist, of Byron, for example, and of Schopenhauer, of Leopardi, and especially of Goethe and Bettel, all of whom he is described meeting and reporting upon with the greatest skill and zest. But he is also shown as being acute enough to know that the gap between art and artist is often very considerable, and not something to make it fuss about.

A fuss is exactly what Hildesheimer does make about Mozart. During the heavy breathing of the opening pages he derides many previous biographers for sentimentalism and comic Romantic pseudo-emotion — "so one is in the significant enough to see even at his most idiotic, contrasting Mozart's 'opera' — 'Certainly there are sections one remembers', etc. — with Beethoven — 'How the heart swells. O eternal art, when I remember thee!' Not only can we agree that 'We cannot take this seriously', I don't see why, in serious books, we should be asked to take it at all. Hildesheimer immediately

in Mozart's rather deliberate objectivity we see that unique element, the absolutely puzzling. We don't know how it arises or how it achieves its effect — the awakening and simultaneous stilling of a longing whose nature and origin we become aware of; but not familiar with the depth of the experience for us without the experience, we are not to reach the experience itself, and that is what I, everyone, understand

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Mozart's music differently. In reality, no one understands it, but the little we do understand is enough to suggest the rest, which we are left to interpret.

If that's the kind of thing you like, this is the book for you. It seems to me that in this passage Hildesheimer fails to understand, because he doesn't want to — it would short-circuit his investigations — that he has resolved the "absolutely puzzling" in saying that "Mozart's music reproduces the depth of experience for us without the experience". Not that that is the best word on the subject, but it's an excellent start. By reproducing the depth of experience, Mozart leaves his listeners free to fill in their own content — what answers, in their experience, to the deep expressiveness of Mozart. In that sense, there is nothing to understand: Mozart's music is pellucid, and anyone who finds it problematic, whether or not he is inclined to invoke the bizarre category of the "absolutely puzzling", does so because he is bewildered by being able to gaze through so transparent a medium at what has most disturbed him in life. To be enabled to confront the most alarming elements in one's life with decorum and sovereign control is itself so disconcerting that many people, among whom I must include Hildesheimer, fail to realize what Mozart's art is offering them, and so are unable to benefit from his complete clarity.

However, if we confront what Mozart's music achieves with what we know of his life, a new rash of problems breaks out. It isn't in the least surprising that, faced with the phenomenon of his art, people have sentimentalized his life, nor that that in turn should give rise to the backlash which we find in its crudest form in Peter Shaffer's unspeakable play *Amadeus*, and in a somewhat more sophisticated version in Hildesheimer's book. Both here and in *Marbot* he is enormously concerned with his subject's letters. In Marbot's case they are taken as conclusive evidence of his state of mind, since he was a Romantic ironist, reporting dispassionately on what he had

No final arbiter

F. W. Sternfeld

CARL DAHLHAUS

Foundations of Music History
Translated by J. B. Robinson
177pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50 (paperback £4.95).
0 521 23281 3

Foundations of Music History, first published in Cologne in 1967, has now appeared in English translation, following the same author's *Esthetics of Music* and *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*. Carl Dahlhaus is a scholar of international standing, and at the age of fifty-five one of the leading German musicologists — a position he has attained through the brilliance of his mind and the scope (and bulk) of his publications.

This short book makes up for its lack of size by the bold and sharp thinking it embodies as well as its good judgment. There is a notable lack of digressions, and excursions of logic and ponderous footnotes, or discussions of matters of secondary importance. The subject tackled is the philosophy and practice of music history, in which Dahlhaus addresses himself, one feels, primarily to his colleagues and peers. (This is not a crib for exams or a convenient summary of more voluminous publications; rather, the author asks whether the current majority view of what constitutes decent methods of music history is sound, and whether the criticisms advanced by sociologists and others are justified.) The author does not suffer from (including those of the "Marxist persuasion") gladly, and is forthright in his commendations and criticisms.

His background and training are for from provincial; in addition to Burkhardt, he quotes Hübner and Brundage, and his view of music history is firmly grounded in his understanding of the fundamentals of general history. But there are also references to the philosophy of R. G. Collingwood and that most influential American textbook, *The History of Western Music* by D. J. Groot. From the main text, as well as the annotated bibliography (absent from the original German), it would seem that the author's heroes as historians are Burkhardt and Droysen, and among histories of music of our own century he characterizes Jacques Hantsch's *Musikgeschichte im Überblick* as a "majestic survey by a great scholar with no original turn of mind". Among the many schools of music history discussed here, the more significant may be labelled as stylistic, documentary, Marxist, receptionist, and structuralist.

The approach of style criticism, championed by Guido Adler, analyses the flowering and decaying of a particular musical style, as if styles had a life-cycle comparable to organisms, an analogy which Dahlhaus rejects on epistemological grounds. The so-called "documentary" biography, well illustrated by O. E. Deutsch's volumes on Mozart and Schubert, presents a maximum of "objective" documents with a minimum of "subjective" commentary. But Dahlhaus feels that "a document, strictly speaking, does not reveal the way it really was; but rather only what its author thought of an event".

On the Marxist position the author admits that "orthodox Marxism conceals some interplay between base and superstructure rather than positing a unilateral dependency; but they insist that the 'final arbiter' is always and

experienced passionately. The relationship of Mozart to his letters is taken to be much more devious: his pathetic begging-letters are alleged to contain elements of exaggeration, calculating self-pity and disingenuous self-exculpation. Their structure is compared to a stilted *opera seria* aria, with invocations to cruel deities and so forth. Such deconstructions are often clever, and will have their appeal, but in general they are only supported, as is a great deal else throughout the book, by volleys of "perhaps", as the author himself admits of the outset. His discovery that Mozart's most moving letter, at least among the completely authenticated ones, in which he talks of death as the "truest and best friend of mankind", written to his fatally ill father, is an accurate paraphrase of a popular work of philosophy by Moses Mendelssohn, doesn't impress me as much as it does him. That Mozart didn't originate his sentiments or phraseology doesn't make it any less sincere. But Hildesheimer is a relentless moralist; Marbot is more fortunate, his biographer usually insisting — he has lapses, as we have seen — that he has a duty to abstain from moral criticism. Hildesheimer reads like a converted sentimentalist, scandalized to find that his hero, who gave more to the world than any other person has done, was a moral mediocrity. Nor, it appears, was he "healthy", if one means by that, as Hildesheimer does, "an absolute state in which the objective condition is in which the subjective feeling", though his not being so only aligns him with almost all the other geniuses except Goethe, for in Hildesheimer's view:

If it is really the mind that builds the body, it is no coincidence that great minds have almost never considered it useful to develop their physique. They have always preferred to have sickly, delicate, unassuming bodies, so they might confront their physical weakness and overcome it again and again. Let it be noted, we are here speaking of great minds, not of healthy minds. The healthy body, but no one is interested in that, except philistines.

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Hildesheimer's years at an English public school evidently had a lasting effect.

So in Hildesheimer's view there is Mozart himself, the great unknown, his letters and reported behaviour, unreliable guides to his true nature, and his works, many of them transcendently great but mysteriously independent of that hidden self. This means that we can only expect from this book illumination of the work, and sadly I didn't find any. Even when he is dealing with the opera, where he might be expected to beat his best, he has nothing insightful to say. His remarks on *Idomeneo*, for instance, don't begin to compare with David Cairns's wonderful essay in his book *Responses*, but then Cairns has a convincing vocabulary of praise, which Hildesheimer lacks, though Hildesheimer doesn't. On *Figaro* he disavows himself with his pronouncement that the Count is "Mozart's most sympathetic character". About *Don Giovanni* he is both simple-minded and vulgar: "How can a girl (Donna Anna) hold on to a strong man long enough for her father to arrive to challenge the seducer? Is it that she enjoyed the bit of her innocence and doesn't want to let the thief go?" On *Così, the sign of the most concentrated critical attention these days, he concludes the "it was an escape into art and artificiality, into his character, into his 'marionettes'". And he fights a running battle with *Die Zauberflöte* throughout the book, finding even the piano music empty, and Sarastro pretentious bore.*

Hildesheimer neither fulfils Marbot's criteria for being a good critic, nor practises criticism as well as Marbot himself. Plagued with the consciousness of an age which produces vastly more "critical" criticism than art, he is only able to achieve critical insight when he adopts a persona, I look forward to the promised posthumous edition of his complete notebooks, from which the all-too-brief biography, we are not given tantalizing extracts, but not a oil to any further furrowed brow performances from Hildesheimer's *self*.

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Moments held fast

Michael Hamburger

GÜNTER KÜNERT

Sillebeo
111pp. Munich: Hanser.
3 445 13847 1

HEINZ CZECHOWSKI

As Freud and Feind
119pp. Munich: Hanser.

The title of Günter Künert's new collection points both to the rural setting of one group of poems in the book and to the tenor of all his recent work. His previous collection, *Abhängungsverfahren* (reviewed in the TLS, October 10, 1980), contained work written both before and after his sudden departure from East Germany. The "still life" of the present book is that of a poet who had tried hard for decades to perform the public and didactic function expected, if not demanded, of poets in a Marxist state, whose early work had been closely bound up with an urban environment (the houses and streets of Berlin) and who had not only lost the public function from one day to the next, but had chosen to settle, not in West Berlin, but in a quiet provincial region of West Germany. The public commitment, true, had begun to needs at an earlier period, before Künert's exile, but his extreme disillusionment with it became evident only in *Abhängungsverfahren*.

Muted as most of the poems are, Künert's energy nor his productivity seems to have been impaired by the diminution of hope. "Wolfgang Hildesheimer" (Little Hope) is the title of one poem in which the rural setting also becomes a more general statement about any event in the contemporary world and those whom it should concern, so that "the cry of a new-born baby / no longer reaches the mother / The voices of a firing squad / become as inaudible as the nocturnal cry of animals / in front of your door." It is the world of communication technology also alluded to in the little poem "Wohnen auf dem Lande", in which the protagonist watches deer from his window every morning for a while, before "switching off". Nature, too, is a still life now, the "nature" of another poem. Not only all hope for the future, but reality itself, seems in danger of being lost.

In so far as the diminution of hope has led to a diminution of explicit commitment in Künert's work, it amounts to a positive gain poetically, for where his very subject is the lack of immediacy affecting every kind of culture, private as well as social, the connections have been broken. Yesterday that photograph of the composer, the dove / There is nothing more to predict. ("Auf dem Lande") Künert is at his best when he is not the old-fashioned moralizing, generalizing of allegorizing and truisms observed or imagined phenomena. (Of his poems to take care of their own meaning. Many of the country poems, the first section of his book and the last poems to the second are of that sort. Most of them are in the "unusually" free-ranging but rhythmically but very free, which, with the prose poem, has always been his happiest medium. The collection also leads Künert less than his poems than adequately reflected by German poets of the past. The function of a poet is to point out the things that are not, but the poet is like the clipped syntax of the poetry of late Goethe; that the no chance of an independent "net" Die Quelle. Photocopy, "eben wir auf. Wo wir auch, wenn wir bestimmt stete dan-

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Künert's capacity to stand his ground as a poet in whatever circumstances and "with the writing hand / hold fast the moment / gift of a clock that takes pity" ("Verweile doch").

Heinz Czechowski's book is a selection from work written over more than two decades and drawn from collections previously published in East Germany, where Czechowski still lives and works. Even in his early work — sparsely represented in this selection — Czechowski differed from Künert in linking less to Brecht than to a rhetorical mode going back — by way of Johannes R. Becher — to Expressionism. Yet as early as the mid-1960s Czechowski decided that the public function of either mode, the dully understated or the grandiloquently hortatory, was not for him. "Communism? A violent, transitional stage / Of human kind, towards what / Attainable distances?" was as far as he would commit himself in "Wassersfahrt", from his eponymous collection of 1967; and another poem from the same book revoked "the useless verses / The dreams, the projections / Into a heaven of glass" of his first phase. Czechowski, therefore, has saved himself the ideological disillusionment and despondency so pervasive at present in German poetry.

His later poetry has a sardonic toughness that comes of a long-standing refusal to be taken in by any collective hopes or to claim any exemplary place "in the pantheon of literary history / That lodging without a future", as he calls it in a poem about Lessing. His own position is summed up in "Was mich betrifft", the title poem of a collection that appeared in East Germany in 1981: "That I'm unable to creep / Or to change my skin / As the occasion demands / Is a blessing, too, for which / I've no one to thank / But myself." In "Creed", from the same collection, Czechowski reflects on history and public affairs with a forthright scepticism and grimness unsurpassed by any of his West German — or formerly East German — contemporaries. "No emperor and no tribune / Leads us but of this present / that is our cross."

Irony and forthrightness in Künert's Czechowski's "K's gedanken" (Thinking of K.), a letter poem that could well be addressed to Künert. It begins: "You too, dear K., are one / Of those poets called German. / We often wrote to each other and talked / In those voices of ours overlaid / With all our experiences of the age. Are we still alive?" Both the multiple ironies that follow and Czechowski's predilection for awkward questions, rather than sententious answers, make it hard to be sure whether the conclusion is not a dart aimed at the recipient's gloom: "And black is not black / Because white is never white. / From the well of the man you do not like / The whispering imperfect rises. But perhaps / It's the past alone / That we love."

It is these letter poems of Czechowski's, with their wide range of historical and literary allusions — including, similarly, blunted darts directed at East German or formerly East German fellow poets — that challenge every current preconception about the differences between East and West German, conformist and dissident poetry. Take away the ideological clatter, Czechowski's poems suggest, and we are all in the same boat — a boat in very great danger of being sunk. Even his wittily devastating deductions of social and personal vanities, like "Gesellschaft" or "Gute Woche", strike home without any need to make allowances for differences between the two political orders. His awkward questions, at once unabashedly individual and wary of self-absorption, self-righteousness or self-satisfaction, are well worth pondering both by the friends and the enemies to whom they are addressed.

Volume forty-one in the series of Gale bibliographies, *Contemporary Poetry in America and England, 1950-1975*, edited by Martin B. Gigerich (453pp. Detroit: Gale. \$42.00 8103 1221-2) includes a listing of the primary works of each of 131 poets, together with a bibliography of their other bibliographies and of all critical books, articles and theses about them. Among the poets covered are John Ashbery, John Berryman, Ted Hughes, Randall Jarrell and Robert Lowell.

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REMY DE GOURMONT

Sixtine: Roman de la vie cérébrale, suivi de Lettres à Sixtine 448pp. 2 264 00446 0

Histoires Magiques et autres réels 413pp. 2 264 00443 2
Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions.

The Symbolist writings of Remy de Gourmont, reissued here in two volumes of Hubert Juin's excellent "Fins de siècles" series, are mainly concerned with relations between the sexes. They range from the early "conte philosophique", "L'Automate", dedicated to "Théodore (sic) Ribot", in which a young engraver murders his mistress in the belief that all women are soulless automatons, to "Le Château singulier" of 1894, an allegorical "conte de fées" showing the power of genuine love to overcome conventions and inhibitions.

Gourmont was born in 1858, into a family able to trace itself back to the master-printers who published the first Greek and Hebrew texts in France at the end of the fifteenth century and, on his mother's side, to the poet Malherbe. He was educated at the lycée in Coutances and at the University of Caen, where he spent most of his time reading in the public library. In 1881 he moved to Paris and to a post of trainee-librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale, supplementing his income in the years that followed by the production of works of vulgarization such as *Un Volcan en éruption* and *Chez les Lapons*.

It was in 1886, shortly after his traumatic discovery of Symbolism as a result of thumbing through a copy of the first issue of *Le Yeve* beneath the Odéon arcades, that he met the extraordinary Berthe Courrière, who was to become his Berthe and his life. At the time and had just published his first novel, *Merle*. She was six years his senior and had been the mistress and model of George Sand's son-in-law, the sculptor Clésinger, before acquiring the reputation of a high priestess of the occult and serving as one of the sources of inspiration for Huysmans's Mme Catelet in *La-bas*. There is evidence that she may have been unhinged. She was twice certified insane in 1890 and again in 1906, having reportedly been found on the first occasion cowering half-naked behind some bushes in a park in Bruges in the middle of the night. She also entertained close relations with the fringes of the Catholic Church.

M. Juin suggests that it is important to read Gourmont's works in chronological order. The earliest of those published here is the so-called *Lettres à Sixtine*, a record in poetry and diary form, as well as letters, of his passionate affair with Berthe Courrière during 1887, though it did not in fact appear until six years after his death in 1921. Berthe initially played hard to get and the letters consist largely of Gourmont's attempts to persuade her to enter into a free and

lasting relationship on a basis of equality. Recognizing that she had already suffered much in her quest for fulfillment, he does not want to take advantage of her apparent willingness to sacrifice herself to him. He seeks to become her "compagnon de route" and, when she does finally succumb, feels himself to be as happy as any man has the right to be. However, after a fortnight's absence on holiday with his family in Normandy, he returns to find Berthe a stranger again and nearly two months are needed for the ground already won to be reconquered.

Gourmont refers to himself as having been already "scepticise" before he met Berthe, devoted to the exploitation of his literary talent "sans autre but qu'une lointaine et chimérique satisfaction". Now he is in the grip of an overriding passion of a kind he thought had passed him by. He is overjoyed when Berthe takes an active interest in his literary ambitions, feeling that only this will become wholly his: "J'aurai ton intelligence aussi, comme ton âme et comme ta beauté". Love in the *Lettres à Sixtine* is viewed as a mountain they must climb together and which they will slip back down if ever they stop straining towards the summit. For both of them it is a question of "tout ou rien" and their relationship is marked with moments when their "ferres se rencontrent front à front". Gourmont, at all times, retains a sense of sexual reality, which is why he writes: "L'action, surtout une certaine action, m'est nécessaire; autrement, l'imagination fait des siennes et le système nerveux s'en ressent avec le reste."

Berthe, for her part, tends frequently to repel his advances with withering irony. The connection between the *Lettres à Sixtine* and *Sixtine* itself, first published in September 1890, is not as obvious as it might seem. Whereas Gourmont, despite the difficulties, basically achieved his aims in real life, Hubert d'Entraques, the fictional hero of his "roman de la vie cérébrale", fails to consummate his affair with the mysterious young widow, Sixtine Magne, and loses her to his Russian rival, Sabos Moscovitch. *Sixtine* is probably the finest Symbolist novel ever written. Its plot is thin and deliberately melodramatic, but in it Gourmont explores in detail the possible consequences of undiluted idealism.

A direct descendant of Huysmans's *Des Esseintes à A Rebours*, which he refers to as "un livre désespérant", it is a confession d'aveu, et pour longtemps, nos goûts et nos dégoûts. Entraques is a writer whose life of "perpetuelle célébration" is "la négation même de la vie ordinaire, l'absence d'ordinaire, l'absence d'ordinaire". He is confined within the limits of his study, which he peoples with the creatures of his imagination. He does not care whether or not the outside world exists because his capacity for dreaming and mental diversification makes it possible for him to experience all forms of existence known to man

without lifting a finger. His philosophy reduces itself to Descartes's *Cogito, ergo sum*: "Hors de ces trois mots, rien n'existe, sans doute, que l'art parce que lui seul, doué de la faculté créatrice, a le pouvoir d'évoquer la vie."

This self-sufficient aesthete falls in love with Sixtine, who he meets during a house-party at the Château de Rabodanges. At first he does not realize what is happening to him, mistaking the "révérence" which denotes "une prise de possession certaine" for "une simple fièvre anisylétique". When he does decide to act, he finds himself ill-equipped to cope with a reality he so much despises. Sixtine waits in vain for him to make a positive move. The appearance of his rival on the scene provokes in him a higher state of tension, but it is only when he is about to lose Sixtine that "pour la première fois, peut-être, de sa vie, il échappait à la domination exclusive de l'art". When Sixtine finally elopes with Moscovitch, he congratulates himself on a lucky escape, determining to spurn "jusqu'au souvenir de l'inconscience tuesque qui aurait pu m'écarter", and turns for consolation to the theologians and mystics in his library.

The trouble with Entraques is that he lacks the vitality needed to escape from his solipsistic universe. His inadequacies are mercilessly exposed by Gourmont's constant irony. It is said of him, for example, that "nul n'avait à un plus haut degré la présence d'esprit du bas de l'escalier". He always knows what to do when it is too late. Even love, in his case, is incapable of effecting the necessary transformation. Doubling his capacity for loving, he points the finger at his own scepticism: "Nul mirage de sensation ne pouvait donc le tromper avec persévérance, avec assez de certitude pour lui donner le courage d'emporter à travers le désert, vers l'inconnu, l'âme d'homme d'amour vivifié par le désir." His desires remain at the level of virtualities, and he experiences few regrets: "Le monde idéal, tel qu'il le détestait, suffisait à son activité toute mentale et trop impuissante à la lutte". Entraques does eventually wonder, in the light of his involuntary affair, if there is "une invincible nature humaine, plus stable que la sensibilité que les architectes de la sensée", but concludes: "Invincible, non, pulsque d'autres méprisants l'ont déçue. C'est que le manque de méthode."

Nevertheless, Gourmont does portray the attractions of Entraques's mode of existence. He is the absolute master in his own sphere. What is the point of venturing outside it? "Ah! quel est bien plus intéressant de se regarder penser que spectacle à voir celui d'un cerveau humain, merveilleuse ruée ou d'idées abelles, en leur nid de cellules, d'illuminés à poisse." His

plus j'avais voulu élever mon âme en intelligence et en amour, et plus elle s'était complue à des chutes et à des culbutes; elle avait l'art et l'audace de élève tous les élans vers le haut par un élan dernier vers le

bas, suivant la logique de sa nature, évidemment plus lourde que l'art spirituel.

This cruel and sometimes violent intelligence discards the discouragingly between flesh and spirit. Hyacinthe, both "femine" and "féminisme", is her feminine nature, basse and desolée, which is satisfied by the sexual shennannigans, but both she and Damase want to bring her spiritual essence into existence. This is impossible because "la forme est la formalité de l'essence", her body constantly gets in the way of any attempt to affirm her spirituality. Hence the bathetic ending of certain chapters, such as when, in the opulent loft of a deserted church, "nos observances le respect du salut des âmes nous unissant selon toute la modestie compatible avec les goûts de l'immort", or when, after writing seductively on his lap to arouse his sexually, she proclaims: "Vall comment on peut me connaître, pas autrement!" Hence also Damase's conclusion that he must give up his "projets d'ascension mystique, la corporalité devenant à la fois... le moyen et l'obstacle, le moteur et le frein des élévations surhumaines". Since the two lovers are not of a ilk who can make do with "une bonne petite existence bien médiocre, bien honnête", being, like Gourmont and Berthe, "destinés de toute éternité à tout-ou-rien", he sadly wishes Hyacinthe "s'en aller, rejoindre les groupes des femmes indécises d'amour à l'heure d'été, à la fois redevenant le fantôme qu'elles sont toutes". It is impossible to know how far Gourmont's own views can be identified with those of his hero, but it is difficult not to see in the disillusionment which characterized *La Fontaine* a reflection of his gloomy illness.

In addition to these three major works, the volumes contain a selection of Gourmont's short stories, including the "Proces moroses" of which the first was bequeathed to him by Villiers, and the "Litanies de la Rose", admired by the Imagists. In 1893 Gourmont died, four years after Villiers's death. "La théorie idéaliste n'est plus guère contestée que par quelques esprits enclins à se plaindre dans les vices moroses". Although he himself was to change and develop, becoming the arch-sceptic and "dissociateur d'idées" whose opinions were one of the dominant factors in French intellectual life in the early years of the century, he never regretted having once bathed in what he referred to as the lotus-flowered lake of Symbolism. There is much still to enjoy and admire in these early works, rich as they are in personal and human significance.

When the time comes to re-evaluate Gourmont's place in modern French history, it may be to them one will find him rather thin than the later, otherworldly intellectual cleverness.

MAURICE AGULHON (Editor)

Histoire de la France urbaine
Tome 4, La ville de l'âge industriel: Le cycle haussmannien.

616pp. Paris: Seuil, 230 fr.
202 06493 5

Following the deserved but unexpected success of their four-volume *Histoire de la France rurale*, the Editions du Seuil have undertaken another series, on urban France this time, equally well edited by Georges Duby, equally handsomely designed and illustrated (a word of praise to Françoise Billotte for the ease and pleasure of perusal), and equally sound scholarship. The third volume, edited by E. Roy Ladurie and covering the period from the Renaissance to the Restoration, came out in 1981. After a two-year pause, here is the fourth, directed by Maurice Agulhon, to carry the story from the 18th century to 1950; and a fifth volume is in the works, that will deal with "the present".

The ample tome in hand can be read as an independent work, as expeditious as one can expect of its prodigious sweep, and particularly noteworthy for addressing specialist and non-specialist, with equal success and little jargon. The organization is complex and sometimes repetitive, but that goes with the territory. Broadly speaking, Marcel Roncayolo writes on growth, population and economy; Jacques Chézy on architecture and urbanism, the aesthetics and literature of towns; Yves Léquin on the conditions of life, social divisions and class struggles; Maurice Crubellier on class and mass cultures; and Agulhon on politics. The result is a treasure house of information and reflection. The title announces the theme: the city of the industrial age is neither a city of industry nor an industrial city, but a product of the Haussmann era. There, Agulhon insists, no *opérations haussmanniennes*. After 1870, there would be rearrangements, corrections, improvements, but the dominant note had been set, in Paris and copycat provinces, and two postwar reconstructions would do little to alter it.

Urban growth, on the other hand, would not wait upon Haussmann's whim, quaking in the 1830s and after the 1840s by a whole series of his enterprises: raw thoroughfares and harbour equipment, "landing gear" for the railways (which some have accused, as in Tours and Lyons, of heated to accept, as they did only in 1902), followed by water and sewage works (beginning in the 1880s and 1890s), transport (1870s and on). When the time comes to re-evaluate Gourmont's place in modern French history, it may be to them one will find him rather thin than the later, otherworldly intellectual cleverness.

own, and Théophile Gautier (a rather solitary voice, admittedly) could welcome "civilisation cutting wide avenues in the maze... of the old city, knocking down houses as the American pioneer cuts down trees".

Much has been made of Haussmann's allegedly repressive aims. Roncayolo shows that such considerations played a minor role. Haussmann was more interested in opening streets where air could move than in creating fields of fire for artillery. Like his contemporaries, he feared overcrowding, the social and sanitary menace of obsolescence and dilapidation, the dangers of uncontrolled growth. But the clearance of noxious, mazy warrens that he set on foot, and the straight lines of his avenues, organized both space and circulation, thus reconciling contemporary aesthetics with trade (based on exchange and ease of movement), and hygiene - interested in access to light and the easy circulation of water and air - with scientific thought, for which the stagnant was unwholesome, movement and circulation healthy. This was also the inspiration of Napoleon III's determination to fill



"Un coin, rue de Seine, mai 1924", one of the 117 tirages plates in *The Art of Old Paris* volume of *The Work of Algot* (1900). Gordon Fraser. £25. 0 80992 007 4

and surround Paris with green space, from the *bois* of Boulogne and Vincennes, through the "Cintres", the lesser parks like Monceau and Montsouris, endless squares and gardens, to the trees lining the streets, which many thought absurd extravagance. George Sand welcomed the "greening of Paris" as the true creation of the time ("C'est du décor, mais du décor admirable et merveilleux"), not only pretty, but instructive: a museum of natural history, she said, from which the people could - and would - learn the secrets of light and colour.

Napoleon III's plans went beyond scenery, however, edifying. The capital's major equipment in water and sewers dated from his years; as does its sanitary structure of clinics, hospitals and dispensaries in all neighbourhoods; its *centres d'animation culturelle*, from the theatres at the Châtelet, opened by Haussmann to enliven an area "so lively by day", to the "Grand Opéra" planned by the Emperor for the place du Château d'Eau (now République), a notion taken up by President Mitterrand, even the decree of 1822, requiring owners to clean, scrape or repaint their houses every ten years, which fell into desuetude after 1914, to be revived by Malraux in the late 1950s. Suburbs spread, to the greater glory and profit

of speculators who bought agricultural land for one franc the square metre, and resold it as building land a few months later for five and ten times as much. St Nazaire, in 1866, sand dunes passed from 6 centimes to 150 francs the square metre. But urban transport also began to burgeon, designed to ease access and mobility, but also to homogenize land values and lower the rents - a hopeless quest, even by the century's end, when socialist or populist municipal councils introduced cheap tram fares.

The digging of sewers, the laying of pipes, in due course the construction of the *métropolitain* (denounced at first as the *nébuleux*), also revealed a reinforced historical references of urban renewal. The Service des Monuments historiques had been set up by Guizot in 1830; but the century's urbanism was declared crucial to the country's renaissance. Le Havre, rebuilt from its rubble, pompous and empty, suggests that the opportunity was lost. More important, perhaps, the rent freeze of 1914, never effectively done away with, condemned real estate and the building industry to decay. By 1940, few urban homes boasted adequate heating, lighting, drainage, or bathrooms; and many of the French had to wait a generation to enjoy them, if they lived that long.

For a long time, then, the nineteenth century retained its tenacious hold. Yves Léquin, in a talented and sensible contribution, lists the projects and achievements of urban improvement, but ignores the vast, inert mass. For that, one would have to read Guy Thullier, who is never cited. As Elysee Reclus, the geographer and anarchist, remarked of Philistines in 1881: the town looks superb when seen from the railway station, but it stinks when you get into its narrow, twisting, awkward streets (one reason, incidentally, why sedan chairs survived into the 1880s). The same could be said, and often was, about scores of other cities.

The French refer to the nineteenth century as *le siècle*, but in most towns it wasn't very pretty: streets ill-paved when paved, lighting absent or feeble, alleyways swimming with sewage, rivers used as sewers, stinking to high heaven, wells polluted, water scarce and ill-accessible, sanitation most noticeable by its absence. Léquin's reference to a *pourvoir urbain* has to be taken literally. What Haussmann managed more or less to avoid for Paris, went on elsewhere: the centre was left to poverty and decay; misery concentrated in monumental settings bred sickness and maledemour. Criminal statistics bear out Louis Chevalier, often quoted in these pages: the *classes laborieuses* were dangerous indeed - first and foremost to each other, of course. And fear of their violence created a climate of insecurity that marks the *fin de siècle*: a combination of traditional delinquencies concentrated where temptations are high, of sociopolitical violence (anarchist and syndicalist) of uprootedness (beggary and vagrancy soaring to fearsome heights).

The *classes laborieuses* were dangerous, too, as a breeding-ground of infection: the cholera swept the country from the 1830s to the century's end (1,000 dead in Paris, as late as 1892), but there were less spectacular and more endemic perils: typhus, typhoid, TB, endless dysenteries. Towns were *plagiés*, just like their hospitals. High death rates, infantile mortality especially, may have helped temper delinquency rates. They certainly ensured that cities would feed on newcomers, so that by the turn of the century nearly two thirds of Parisians, Rouennais, Caennais, turned out to have been born elsewhere. Fear of infection encouraged the shift of the *bourgeoisie* into those *banlieues* that helped confirm the social differentiation of urban space. It also hastened the realization that health was no longer an individual problem, but a collective one: sanitation again, but also vaccination against smallpox, made free in 1893, compulsory in 1902. Which, one may add, produced a novel kind of party among the fashionable few: "on organise des déjeuners intimes, au dessert arrive le médecin, vaccin en poche... C'est le dernier

between the wars, it produced a sort of *architecture-minceur*, saved from dreariness only by the proliferation of electric signs - as when André Citroën used the Eiffel Tower for a gigantic advertisement. As for "urbanism" (born in 1867, with Ildefonso Cerda's *Teoría general de la urbanización*), which seems to have reached the French on the eve of the First World War, it would be left mostly to the likes of Le Corbusier, eustere to the point of aridity. Chézy is good on Le Corbusier (he doesn't like him), for whom Pétain's coming seems to have brought a divine surprise: he got a job in Le Corbusier's cabinet. The Direction de l'Urbanisme was set up under Vichy. It got its chance and muffed it in 1945 when, with one in five of France's buildings damaged (and more than that on their last legs from French neglect), urbanism was declared crucial to the country's renaissance. Le Havre, rebuilt from its rubble, pompous and empty, suggests that the opportunity was lost. More important, perhaps, the rent freeze of 1914, never effectively done away with, condemned real estate and the building industry to decay. By 1940, few urban homes boasted adequate heating, lighting, drainage, or bathrooms; and many of the French had to wait a generation to enjoy them, if they lived that long.

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Crossing the boundaries

Richard Buxton

LOUIS GERNET
Les Grecs sans miracle: Textes réunis
Édité par Riccardo di Donato
429pp. Paris: Maspero. 230fr.
2 7071 1365 4

It is always a pleasure to greet an addition to the series "Textes à l'appui", the adventurous collection of studies of classical antiquity published by Maspero. Quite apart from the content, these durable paperbacks are beautifully produced, with covers displaying a delightful sense of colour and design. On the front of the volume under review there are two heads. One belongs to Dionysus, the other to the late Louis Gernet. Leaving aside the spectacles and the baldness (Gernet's in each case), we see a marked resemblance between these distinguished profiles. Not that there is anything ecstatic or uncontrolled about the writing of Gernet; quite the reverse. But Gernet, like Dionysus, was a boundary-crosser. His reputation, now higher than ever, rests principally on two works, *Droit et société dans la Grèce antique* (1955) and *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique* (1968, posthumously). These demonstrate in full measure their author's ability to range freely over classical law, history, myth and ritual, and his acumen in deploying perspectives which originated from work in sociology. There is another similarity between the two heads: both Gernet and Dionysus were about thirty years of his academic career in Algeria, only returning to Paris in 1948 when he was in his mid-sixties; and when he did return, the seminars which he gave at the École Pratique des Hautes Études were by all accounts attended only by a

few. One of those pupils, Jean-Pierre Vernant, contributes the preface to *Les Grecs sans miracle*. Vernant leads us to expect threefold enlightenment from the material which the editor, R. di Donato, has put together: insight into the progress of Gernet's own thought; illumination of the intellectual milieu in which he grew up, and worked; and confirmation of the crucial role in Gernet's thinking occupied by the passage from "pre-law", "pre-law": Greece to the world of the classical city. Having Vernant write you a preface may be a

pretty risky business (as Marcel Detienne will have found with *Les Jardins d'Adonis*): it is almost impossible for the book to live up to the self-off. In the present case, so appetizing is the introductory Pernat that one anticipates a succulent banquet indeed.

For starters we get a number of previously unpublished pieces, described by Vernant as "d'intérêt majeur". This is hardly true of all the items, but two of them are useful in helping us to understand what Gernet was driving at. "Les débuts de l'hellénisme" is about the idea, to which Gernet came back repeatedly from different angles, that certain aspects of Greek thought have their antecedents in religious patterns of belief and behaviour. The same point is made in the piece which examines the moral-philosophical concept of *sôphrosynê* (self-control, restraint, self-discipline). Gernet intriguingly observes that one place where self-discipline is found is in initiation ceremonies, since such conduct is characteristically expected of those subjected to rites of passage as they move from age-class to age-class. If we accept the widespread existence in pre-classical Greece of initiation ceremonies, then Gernet's essay gives a further instance of the *laissez-faire* under the *polis* of what had formerly been a religious notion. Unfortunately Gernet's argument is sketchy as it stands, and would surely have been reworked and properly documented by the author before publication.

A hundred and sixty-one pages are devoted to reviews ("interventions critiques") or review articles ("discussions"). Even when the reviewer has such an easy manner as Gernet - often ironical but never bilious - this still does not make for easy reading. But some interesting points emerge. The vast majority of the reviews are for sociological studies. (Written for *L'Année sociologique* alone), supporting, if support were needed, the picture of Gernet as a boundary-crosser. He is warmest in his praise of those who themselves go beyond traditional approaches to classical texts: two major works by M. I. Finley, *Spudias in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens* and *The World of Odysseus*, received prompt and generous notices. A constant object of Gernet's criticism is the belief (which he describes as "superstitions") in an idealized spirit of Hellenism, the "Greek genius", the "Greek miracle", etc. As he rightly

observes, to account for the reforms of Cleisthenes by invoking the *esprit égalitaire* of the Greeks is simply to rephrase the question.

In order to solve this and similar problems we are urged to recover the context, as part of an exercise in historical anthropology. In such an undertaking false familiarity with the Greeks is fatal, since it deprives history of its power to shock us by its otherness - that is, to *dépayser*. Typical of his approach is his reaction to the theory that the Delphic oracle was the vehicle for the propagation of a new, and newly spiritual, religious doctrine. He objects that no satisfactory context, in terms of the behaviour of the priesthood, has been established in order to make the notion of propaganda stick. No less characteristically, he is sceptical of the supposed context of the propaganda.

"De quoi l'auteur a-t-il voulu faire gloire à Delphes? Des éternités à une pensée qui s'apparentait à la nôtre et dont on ne doute pas qu'elle corresponde à une vérité éternelle." "Qui a apparemment à la note" - the opposite of *dépaysement*.

After so many pages of Gernet's responses to others, one's indignation is relieved on page 247: "You-you. En marge d'Hérodote." This article, published in 1932, is more fun than anything else di Donato has given us. Gernet starts from the remark of Herodotus (4, 189) that among the practices borrowed by the Greeks from the barbarians of North Africa was the utterance by women of shrill ritual cries at certain religious ceremonies. With this in mind, Gernet first notes

the contextual similarities between the Berber cry of *you-you* and the cry which the ancient Greeks referred to as *olôphos*. The rapprochement becomes neater still when he gives reasons for thinking that the word *olôphos* could be used to denote the cry literally transcribed as *ou-ou-ou*. More important is the analysis of the role of the cries. It had been argued that they were uttered in order to ward off evil spirits; or, alternatively, that they arose "spontaneously" as individuals responded to the promptings of emotion experienced during a ritual. The former explanation is in Gernet's view secondary, and the latter ignores the collectiveness of the phenomenon. With eminent good sense the admittance of Durkheim and Mauss concludes: "Nous avons affaire à un usage social du cri: celui-ci fait partie de l'expression obligatoire des sentiments; il est d'ordre institutionnel."

The last section of the book consists of some writings on contemporary political issues - or, as the editor delicately puts it, "Politique et culture". While it is pertinent to demonstrate the extent of Gernet's commitment to socialism, I am not sure that the intrinsic worth of at least some of the essays merited re-publication. In my case the editor should - or respectively Gernetian grounds - have provided us with a detailed political context within which to locate the arguments. In the absence of such assistance I would guess that (for instance) Gernet's lengthy and impassioned plea that France should more fervently embrace municipal socialism (1908) is likely to take the 1980s. Gernet was on the side of the angels, but an air of distance hangs over some of his later discussions of politics. Although to say that racism was a major issue at the time of the occupation of France is to state the obvious, nevertheless in writing it 1943, from Algeria, about racism in antiquity, Gernet somehow still remained on the margins.

Les Grecs sans miracle will not, then, materially affect Gernet's standing. It does not bear comparison with his best work, but as a useful collection of *kleine Schriften* it helps to fill out our impression of a humane and truly innovative scholar.

Professor Kennedy's is more of a handbook about the external of the history of rhetoric than a confrontation with some of these larger issues, and it attempts to go from Constantine to thirteenth-century Byzantium. Obviously some of these problems crop up from time to time, but they tend to become lost in the welter of detail. Unfortunately, too, the way in which Kennedy has divided his material makes it impossible for him to pursue some of the themes most worth pursuing. He starts this volume with Eusebius and Constantine, relegating both early Christian and Greek imperial literature to the end of the previous volume (*The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World*, 1971). But so much of the possibility of not only discussing the formative period of Christian expression and its relation to classical language and ideas, but also of tracing the continuity between the Greek orators of the Second Sophistic and their Christian successors in the Greek cities of the Late Empire.

The theme, embracing the importance of rhetoric itself in late antiquity, and the place of Christianity in relation to it, is far too big for a handbook, however useful, and no one could do justice to it within the compass. Kennedy passes over, for instance, the striking revival of rhetoric in the late Roman Empire, the expense of prose in late Greek panegyric, and he is good as usual in the sixth century altogether. Any one who picks holes. But what we need now is not a history of rhetoric but an attempt to grapple in wide terms with just some of the problems I have suggested (there are countless others) and to ask, as Kennedy usually does not, what the characteristic forms of expression of the later empire actually reveal about the nature of that society.

Byzantium, City of Gold: City of Pain, with a text by Paul Fournier, a photograph by Paul Fournier, a preface addition to Orbis Publications, "Behooves of the Ancient World" (128pp, £10.05/\$13.33). It begins with the misadventure of the emperor of the small Greek colony in the shadow of the Bosphorus was called Byzantium, and with an epilogue: "The City of Gold and the City of Pain". The main body of the book documents and interprets the military and architectural grandeur of the three-named city.

various kinds of tension, of which its relation to the prevailing educational system and its effects was not the least. To many it seemed to clash with accepted intellectual values, for it taught that the source of true knowledge lay outside any human education. The frills and conceits of rhetoric obscured the truth, in the eyes of many Christians, and most of the great Christian writers who did show the influence of Greek or Latin rhetoric felt uneasy about it to the end of their days. There was scope for much debate as to what was the "true" rhetoric, or how Christianity could be reconciled with the seductive voices of the classics, with Cicero or Virgil in the West and Plato or Demosthenes in the East. The language of the Bible was a great stumbling-block to an early fusion of cultures, but some Christian writers actually hoisted on their gilded, or pagan rhetoric. Certainly, Christianity was able to appeal to the humbler levels of society, and consequently it placed its own educated adherents in a very awkward position. When the emperors themselves became Christian - the point at which George Kennedy begins in this, the third volume of his history of rhetoric in the classical world - there were acute problems of adjustment.

And yet from the very beginning Christianity itself was built on rhetoric. It was a religion of the book, and the form in which it evolved was deeply dependent on Greek philosophical discourse. Christ was revealed, it taught, as the Logos, and this in turn could be seen, as it was by Eusebius in the fourth century, as part of the system of signs by which God made known His dispensation to the world. Thus there were two levels: the "higher" rhetoric, known only through God, and the more worldly rhetoric to which Christians had as much right as pagans. The tension is shown with perfect clarity in the *Life of Anthony*, the first monastic precursor of the vast Christian hagiographic literature, for this life of an unwashed hermit who probably spoke Coptic is in fact a sophisticated document written by the great Athanasius, and incorporating long and elaborate speeches on complex doctrinal and political issues.

Not only was there by now hardly any Christian literature that could genuinely claim an unadorned simplicity, the formulation of the faith itself demanded the very qualities of which it professed to disapprove.

But of course no reviewer of an anthology can resist mentioning something they would like to have seen included. I would have liked, for its simplicity, Matthew Arnold's "Longing" for its metaphysics, Jung's dream of the yogi whose dream Jung was; some entries from Swadlow's *Journal of Dreams*, where he gives the most outrageously erotic dreams a serious interpretation; from *The Poetics*, instead of Wordsworth's "prose" Arab dream, the "huge and mighty forms" of Book I; and the coming of rain in Part V of "The Ascent of Rain".

The book is proof of how people treasure dreams, but there is a pity too, as a reader as well as a writer, the striking revival of the dream in the late Roman Empire, the expense of prose in late Greek panegyric, and he is good as usual in the sixth century altogether. Any one who picks holes. But what we need now is not a history of rhetoric but an attempt to grapple in wide terms with just some of the problems I have suggested (there are countless others) and to ask, as Kennedy usually does not, what the characteristic forms of expression of the later empire actually reveal about the nature of that society.

STEPHEN BROOK (Editor)

The Oxford Book of Dreams
268pp. Oxford University Press.
£8.55.
019 214130 9

CHRISTOPHER EVANS

Landscapes of the Night: How and why we dream
Edited and completed by Peter Evans
256pp. Gallancz £7.95.
0575 031042

OUP's splendid collection will nail once and for all the notion that dreams are boring. Irrelevant effusions, that relating your dreams is the ultimate social sin. Most people's dreams in fact are more interesting than their conversation pieces. They are at least as good as the only chance at splashing out boldly with colour, humour and invention. The real problem is why can't we do it when we are awake? What happens to all that fertility when it is squashed by daylight reasoning, and why do only lunatics, lovers and poets have access to it then?

Stephen Brook could hardly have done the job better. The great, expected dreams are here: "Kubik Khan"; De Quincey's drugged landscapes; Anna Karenina's mumbled, "small and dreadful", bearded peasant; Lucy Snowe's dream of the beloved dead who ignored her; the fearful reptile in *The Idiot*; Jung's Siegfried dream; the *Wuthering Heights* dream; Borges's dreamed construction of a man; the butterfly dream of Chuang-tzu; the nightmare song from *Johanne*; Milton's "late-espoused Saint" sonnet; Alice's awakening from Wonderland; end-of course "Last night I dream I went to Manderley again". But there are lots of surprises. Who would have thought that dreamy Southey would have produced such a good crop, or Ruskin been so prolific of absolutely dreadful nightmares? Brook has some fine modern poems (Sexton, Redgrave, Shuttle, Hughes, Larkin, Lucie-Smith, Berryman); and Norse sagas, Virgil, Nabokov, Evelyn Waugh, dreaming of boredom; Ogden Nash, Petronius, Aristotle, Joseph Heller; and a painful piece from Nadezhda Mandelstam's *Hope Abandoned*: "You came to me every night in my sleep, and I kept asking what had happened, but you did not reply."

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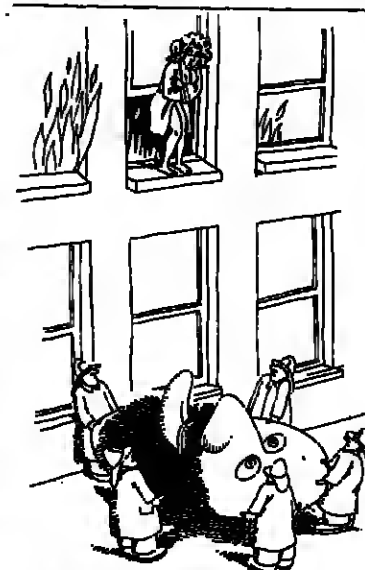
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The night visitors

Rosemary Dinnage

at adds with who he really is. "Like those mutilated saints in cathedrals which ignorant archaeologists have restored, fitting the head of one to the body of another and jumbling all their attributes and names". Indeed the truly terrible dream may contain very little but some highly charged symbol, and in general the more rambling the narrative the less the emotion. Stevenson was haunted in sleep by "a certain hue of brown". A character in *Midnight's Children* sees his death as a bright pomegranate floating behind him in mid-air.



Reproduced from B. Kliban's *Luminous Animals and Other Drawings* (1969, 16 in colour. Penguin, £2.95, 0 14 006861 9).

Though usually so concrete, dreams can occasionally be metaphysical, though perhaps with such condensed import that they can scarcely be translated into waking language. There is the dream, such as one of Gide's in which is not included here, where the dreamer in his dream remembers a dream. Freud says the form of the dream can represent its content; in which case Gide's subject-matter was the nature of recollection, rather than the narrative wrapped round to keep the thing together. Then there is the "lucid dream", where the subject knows he is asleep - often a useful escape mechanism at the crisis of the *pavor nocturnus*. Rarely - the only example given here is Henry James's dream of turning on a ghostly attacker and routing him completely - the lucid dreamer seems to take action to control the story. This was, says James, a bad dream, "the most admirable nightmare of my life".

There is not much here about the meanings and mechanisms of dreams, though many of the virtuoso dreamers included add their own observations. Trying to scan a dream for meaning and context is literally like tipping a kaleidoscope about: patterns extraordinarily appear and reappear, all related and in the same basic colours. It is a poor dream, a gate-of-ivory dream, that has only one "meaning". It is this resonance that distinguishes the sleep dream from the poverty of daydream. The psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott describes a patient who wasted time compulsively playing games of Patience. If instead she had dreamed of playing Patience, he says, she could have said to her, "You are struggling with God or fate, sometimes winning and sometimes losing; the aim being to control the destiny of four royal families".

Though the anthology spans nearly thirty centuries there is remarkably little sign here of the march of history. The elements remain much the same, though trains and planes and electricity come on the scene (presumably people now dream of computers). One thing that does noticeably change within modern times is a growing self-consciousness about the dream, which now comes with its author's interpretation. Doris Lessing's character dreams of a multicoloured desert and wakes deciding she has a long haul to undertake. Penelope Shuttle dreams of being deaf, and makes her poem the interpretation. And of course games are played now with dream interpretation, not better than two pages from Catch-22 about a

psychiatrist and a fish ("What does the fish remind you of? 'Other fish'. 'And what does the other fish remind you of?' 'Other fish.'"). Or than Iria Murloch's egg dream, charming, witty, and ridiculous.

"He dreamt he was an egg."
"An egg?"
"He was a huge white egg floating in a sea of turquoise blue, and he was everything that there was."

"It sounds a nice dream."
"No dream is nice for Magnus. All dream experiences fill him with terror. Now he feels that all his limbs are withdrawing inside his body and his face is flattening out and his features are disappearing. He keeps looking in the mirror to make sure his nose hasn't vanished."

"Parr thing. What does the dream mean?"
"Fear of castration."
"What a pity. It sounds so beautiful," said Harriet.

"It's a painter's dream." She pictured the great white egg, tinged a little with ivory, floating in the deeply saturated turquoise acean.

Landscapes of the Night, begun by the late Christopher Evans and finished by Peter Evans, gives us a run-down of the momentous day in the 1950s when an American researcher first noticed that there were rapid movements of the eyeballs under the lids of a sleeping baby. The same old phenomenon was found in adult sleepers, and it became clear that those people who claim never to dream are deluding themselves; we all spend up to two hours a night dreaming, for people woken during the eye-movement phase of sleep always reported a dream, but at other times never. Dream time seems to be precious; subjects specifically deprived of it make up by spending most of their night dreaming afterwards.

There are also some findings here. Dreams?

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The periodicals, 4: *Helix*

**Oxford
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کتابخانه مجلس شورای ملی

Eric Korn

مكتبة من الامل

'The Borders of Vision'

more implied. Gowland's and also have carried with it associations of vice. Many "hoosies" and of the period contained mercurials but corrosive sublimate was the of all mercurials and had a connection with the old treatment of syphilis. Bathing period was a happy advertisement for empires offering mental cure. No doubt the

was socially a cut above these, and catered for old rakes and the innocent alike. This thought probably lies behind the Countess's

It was the Brahmo-Samaj leaders, like Mohan Mohan Roy, who in 1816 – years before Macaulay – inspired the name for a western-style college in Calcutta. In 1823 Roy opposed the foundation of a Sanskrit College, the students were to be in the Calcutta

ess, in 1828 and 1829, of the progress
ada by pupils at Roy's "Anglo-
ndu" School, in English literature

Dr. FAWCETT is a lecturer in French at the University of Leicester.

Mr. FENTON is Managing Director of Salamander Press.

Dr. Fritz LYON's most recent book is *Before the Revolution, 1778*.

other remarks in his review, e.g. Hobson often confuses matters by writing as though illusions involve

DAVID MATTHEWS is the author of *Michael Tippett: An introductory study* (1980).

Haskell cites Manet's "Execution of Maximilian" and Picasso's "Guernica"

LICHENBERG: *A doctrine of scattered occasions, 1953.*

MICHAEL TANNER has recently contributed to *The Wagner Companion* and *The State of the Language*.

EUDEN WEBER's books include *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1977.*

BETRAYAL

JEREMY IRONS BEN KINGSLEY
PATRICIA HODGE
in SAM SPIEGEL'S production of HAROLD PINTER'S

BETRAYAL

Directed by DAVID JONES

CASTING BY
JILL HARRISON
PRODUCTION DESIGNER
JOHN HARRISON
PRODUCTION EDITOR
JOHN HARRISON
PRODUCTION OFFICE
JILL HARRISON
PRODUCTION OFFICE
JILL HARRISON
PRODUCTION OFFICE
JILL HARRISON

CURXON

Myself I'd just been looking for a suitable place to enter my elaborate pun even as we came to an unbidden, a symphony in brass when someone was describing an Italian burial ground where, he said, the family mausolea were not arranged with steps down to them but one above another like pigeon holes. "Y' mean," I purred, "that the vaults de Brutus were not in, er, stairs, but in, er, shelves?" Life was very sweet those days.

★ ★ ★

I've just bought a half interest in the chest of Curiosa, a precious noble Lord well, I was only but interested, as you can well imagine Curiosa, as you can well imagine Alice being made to say in some satirical lampoon of Dostoevsky

engulphed to the very Booker Prize for the banging together of which in the close proximity added greatly to the stimulating of our own London Literary.

And than there is *Roped on the Railway*, ineffectually amended on the spine, with a second ill-fitting lettering piece, to *On the Railway*, but with the subtitled *The Story of a Girl* was first *Ravished* and then *Chastised on the Northern Express*. This work of course much sought after for its light it sheds on LNER train-hand practices at the turn of the century. The title page is dated 1894, which would carry more conviction if it were to contain a reference to *Unhallowed* *Place of Unhallowed* 1893, though this date may also be facetious, and if the hard did participate in the Boer War, leading the identity narrative to the spleen.

be came from "The Bible says,"
back it said: "The Bible says,"
returned to the right hand of the
The Psychics say he left a
sauceur. "We come back to
Cities of the Plain need you."
I bet. Amos got invited to
cocktail parties. "Do your
bleedy-city stitick again. You
heard it. "O and Cassandra was
on Trojan Break fast TV. She
have made it to the main current
show, *Prism Time*.

★ ★ ★

Forget I said that about the
will you? I see the pamphlet
reproduced, even in part.
written permission of the
Doctor Sir George King, OBE
of Human Relations, and
ter of Yoga, PhD, DPhil.

[illegible]

It was the Brahmo Samaj leaders Ram Mohun Roy, who in 1816 - years before Macaulay - instigated the schism for a western-style college in Calcutta. In 1823 Roy opposed the foundation of a Sanskrit College in Calcutta.

SEBASTIAN CARTER is at present writing an account of the completion of William Morris's *Cupid and Psyche* project.

B. A. L. CRANSTON is Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum.

JOHN DREYFUS's *History of the Nonesuch Press* was published in 1981.

PETER FAUCHET is a lecturer in French at the University of Leicester.

TOM FENTON is Managing Director of the Salamander Press.

KYRIL FITZLYON's most recent book is *Before the Revolution, 1778*.

will be published in 1984.

EUGENE KAMENKA is Head of the History of Ideas Unit at the Australian National University, Canberra.

HERBERT LOMAX's collection of poems *Fire in the Garden*, will be published by Oxford University Press next year.

DAVID MCDUFF is currently working on a new translation of Dostoevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead*.

W. H. MCCREA is Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at the University of Sussex.

DAVID MATTHEWS is the author of *Michael Tippett: An Introductory study* 1980.

PRUE SHAW is a lecturer in Italian at Bedford College, London.

A. W. B. SIMPSON is Professor of Law at the University of Kent.

ZARA STEINER is editor of *The Times Survey of the World*, 1982.

J. P. STERN's books include *G. C. Lichtenberg: A doctrine of scattered occasions*, 1953.

MICHAEL TANNER has recently contributed to *The Wagner Companion* and *The State of the Language*.

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